AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraphs [19], [39], [43], and [53] with the following corresponding amended paragraphs:

[19] As shown in Figure 2A, a bioabsorbable elongated band 1 of the present invention may have a first end 2, a second end 4, and a longitudinal, flexible body 3. Second end 4[,] may ~~be tapered~~ have a tapered surface 4a and include a needle 5. The flexible body 3 in this embodiment may be a molded from a bioabsorbable polymer component.

[39] Figure 4A shows a band 90 with a first end 91 and a second end 92. The band 90 has been wound around the sternum 47 and locked into place on the surface of the sternum 47 with a first locking member 56 attaching first end 91 of the band 90 to the sternum 47 and a second locking member 55 attaching the second end 92 of the band 90 to the sternum 47. The locking members 55 and 56 shown, may be any type of bioabsorbable fastener, such as pins, screws, tacks, or combinations thereof and the number of locking members is not intended to be limiting. For example, one or more fasteners may be used to attach either end of the band to bone and no specific layout or configuration for the fasteners is required. One of ordinary skill in the art will understand that a doctor performing this type of procedure should be able to determine the optimal level of attachment needed to secure the band to or around the injury.

[43] The embodiment shown in Figure 4D[,] is advantageous because the stiff and strong plate of second end 66 keeps the sternotomy effectively closed against a number of different forces, which may try to separate the sternum parts from each other. For example, tensile forces, shear forces, and bending forces, may all be exerted against the sternum parts at various times. The band system of the present invention, and particularly the embodiment shown in Figure [3]4D, prevents the sternum from pulling apart, sliding, and bending, as a result of these forces. In this way the negative effects of physiological forces, which may open the sternotomy and delay or prevent healing, are eliminated.

[53] According to an advantageous embodiment of the invention, elements of the system, such as a band and/or a locking member, may have a special coating layer on ~~its~~ their surfaces and may contain one or more bioactive substances, such as antibiotics, chemotherapeutic substances, growth factors like bone morphogenic proteins, substances accelerating the healing of the wound and osteotomy, hormones or other drugs and the like. Such bioactive elements are especially advantageous in surgical use, because they contribute biochemically to the healing of the lesion in addition to providing mechanical support.